

# Sherdley Primary School

Mill Lane, Sutton, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 4HA

## Inspection dates

18–19 July 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The determination and high expectations of the present headteacher have brought about considerable improvements since his appointment.
- Since the last inspection, outcomes declined. However, the headteacher has rapidly addressed a legacy of underachievement brought about by staff turbulence and previously weak teaching. Pupils currently in the school, including those who are disadvantaged, make strong progress in a wide range of subjects. Older pupils are rapidly catching up with what they have missed due to teaching which was previously weak.
- Supported by the deputy headteacher, the headteacher has reignited a passion and commitment in staff to ensure that teaching is now consistently good.
- However, teachers do not always provide pupils with enough detail on how to improve the quality of their writing.
- Subject leaders ensure that staff have the up-to-date knowledge and the skills that they need to maintain the quality of teaching. This is resulting in improving achievements for pupils currently in the school.
- The overall quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers analyse their assessment information rigorously. They have high expectations and strong subject knowledge which they use well to support and challenge pupils' learning. This is especially strong in the teaching of mathematics and reading.
- Teaching and leadership of the early years is of the highest quality. Children settle quickly and make good progress. Parents are encouraged to play an important part in their child's learning. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Staff are well trained to meet their needs. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children make.
- Attendance is above the national average. However, there are a small number of pupils whose parents do not ensure that they attend school as often as they should.
- Pupils feel safe and enjoy coming to school. They take pride in their work and are proud of their achievements. Their good conduct in and around the school, good manners, respect and support for each other reflect the positive, caring ethos which has been created within the school.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
  - accurately identifying, and effectively sharing, exactly what pupils need to do to improve the quality and accuracy of their writing
  - enhance the opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in writing in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Improving the attendance of a small minority of pupils who are persistently absent by making sure that they attend school on time and as regularly as other pupils nationally.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully tackled the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching that occurred during a period of considerable staff turbulence. The changes brought about by the present headteacher since the last inspection have reignited a passion and determination in leaders and staff to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better. Leaders and governors strongly and effectively challenge any underperformance and take effective action. However, the legacy of weak teaching still lingers in some of the outcomes of older pupils.
- The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's tireless efforts to improve many aspects of the school's work have borne fruit. They work as an efficient and effective team with staff and governors to develop a clear vision for improvement. Leaders' evaluation of the strengths of the school and areas for development are accurate. This enables them to build on their successes systematically, particularly in reading, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. Staff speak highly of the effective support and training they receive, including opportunities to work with other colleagues and other schools.
- Subject leaders monitor their subjects well and take decisive action to bring about improvement. For example they have made changes to the teaching of phonics in Reception and key stage 1. They ensure that staff have the skills and knowledge that they need to maintain high-quality teaching. This has resulted in improving achievement for pupils currently in the school.
- Leaders and teachers carry out detailed analysis of pupils' progress and outcomes in order to ensure that they identify and tackle any gaps in pupil's learning effectively. Strong progress is made towards expected standards for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils. It ensures that pupils have access to first-hand experiences that enrich their knowledge and understanding. For example, while studying habitats in science, pupils visited a local beach and nature reserve to study them at first hand. They spoke with excitement about the squirrels they saw and the environment that they live in. This enthusiasm for learning following the visit was also seen in the high-quality writing they produced and their art and design work. The houses for squirrels they had created cooperatively were very imaginative. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development strongly in order to equip them for the next stages in their education.
- Leaders have ensured that fundamental British values are woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is catered for well. Pupils have a good understanding of the rule of law; democracy, through the election of their pupil voice representatives; respect, through the rights of the child and the breadth of modern British culture.
- Leaders and governors use the additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils effectively. Gaps in pupils' learning are addressed swiftly and pupils catch up quickly. Teachers' own assessments show that disadvantaged pupils are typically making more progress than their peers and in some year groups the difference in attainment is

diminishing.

- Parents are well informed about their children's progress through regular newsletters, information on the website, individual reports and information events. Leaders have worked hard to provide pastoral support for the most vulnerable families. Parents spoken to during the inspection talk highly of the care, guidance and support provided by the school.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding they receive for the growing number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils are supported very well by highly trained staff. Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have access to the full range of activities and are fully included in the life of the school. Leaders carefully plan support for each pupil to maximise the progress they make.
- Leaders use the additional funding for sports and healthy lifestyles effectively. High-quality coaching and training for staff allow pupils to participate in a range of different sports. This allows them to develop high levels of proficiency and skill. Consequently, this has led to success in competitions, including reaching the finals of the football league trophy.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governance of the school is effective. Governors share leaders' vision and commitment. They know the school well because of the high-quality information they receive. Their termly visits to the school allow them to check the accuracy of the information they receive. They understand how teachers are going about raising standards.
- Governors are aspirational for the pupils of Sherdley Primary School and are deeply committed to striving continually to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Governors have a secure understanding of the school's policy for managing teachers' performance and ensure that it is robustly applied.
- Governors provide a high level of challenge to school leaders and are rigorous in validating the information they receive through robust questioning and monitoring.
- They bring a wealth of experience to the leadership and management of the school and ensure that they regularly attend training in order to support the strategic direction of the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children, including those members of staff who work in the school's breakfast and after-school provision.
- Leaders have established a positive culture that promotes the importance of the safety and well-being of all pupils. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date

knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about the potential risks that pupils may face. Records are fit for purpose and meticulously kept. Leaders share information with parents and appropriate authorities effectively to ensure pupils' safety.

- Governors have ensured that appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection.
- Online safety is given a high priority. Staff teach pupils effectively how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including the use of technology.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Good support from well-informed subject leaders has strengthened teaching in many subjects. This is especially strong in the teaching of mathematics and reading.
- Teachers analyse their assessment information meticulously to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They use assessment effectively to ensure that tasks appropriately match the needs of the pupils and include elements of challenge. Gaps in pupils' learning, as a result of the legacy of weaker teaching, are being tackled through effectively targeted support sessions and high-quality teaching. An increasing proportion of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are now working at a greater depth, especially in reading, mathematics and other subject areas.
- Teachers use a range of resources and equipment to support pupils' learning. They model effectively a range of strategies and pupils are encouraged to investigate their own methods when solving problems in mathematics.
- There is clarity in teaching across the school as a result of well-prepared learning opportunities which capture the interests of the pupils. Teachers use questions effectively to deepen pupils' understanding and make them think. This is bringing about rapid improvements in the progress that pupils make.
- Work in pupils' books reflects the pride that they have in their work. There is a range of evidence depicting the progress that pupils make across subjects other than English and mathematics, especially in science and history. Pupils are reflective and imaginative in the language they use. For example, work on poetry in Year 5 described the landscape during the winter season as 'a blanket of snow sewed together by snowflakes'.
- During learning activities, highly perceptive support staff quickly pick up on any misconceptions. They use questions effectively to encourage the pupils to think through what they want to write. Pupils are able to apply their phonics skills and vocabulary knowledge across a range of subjects including science.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who are disadvantaged, are supported well. During a physical education session the teacher explained the objective of the team game and as a result of the care, guidance and support provided by support staff, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities were able to join in the game with some degree of success. The huge smile on their faces clearly showed the enjoyment they were experiencing and the great sense of achievement.

- Parents are given an accurate picture of their child's progress. Leaders provide sessions for parents to help them to support their children at home, and these are well attended.
- Staff have nurtured strong positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils work confidently. They have a good command of language and confidently ask for clarification if it is needed. They are happy to learn from their mistakes and know what they need to do to improve their learning.
- Teachers do not always provide enough information for pupils by sharing exactly what needs to be done to improve the quality of their writing.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Those spoken to during the inspection who have been at the school for some time said that the school has improved a lot since the appointment of the present headteacher. Pupils said that they enjoy the challenges that teachers give them in their work, especially in mathematics, because 'It makes you think and your learning improves.' They take pride in their work and are proud of their achievements.
- Older pupils take on their responsibilities with a sense of pride. The voice of the pupils is evident within the school. Pupils feel valued and listened to. They know that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns or worries. Younger pupils talk confidently about the bench that they can sit on if they feel sad or lonely and an older pupil will always come and see if they are all right. Older pupils have been very proactive in organising events to raise funds which will be used to develop a sensory room to help some of the more vulnerable pupils in the school.
- A wide range of extra-curricular clubs contributes greatly to the personal development and welfare of pupils. Breakfast club is very well attended and there is a wide range of appropriate activities provided. Strong positive relationships between pupils and adults ensure a good start for pupils at the beginning of the school day. Pupils benefit from the range of clubs to develop sporting prowess and support healthy living. For example, family cooking sessions to promote healthy eating and healthy lunchboxes have proven to be very popular.
- The school arranges many visits to enrich the curriculum, which pupils also enjoy. For example, they visited the local Kingdom Hall and studied the local mosque as part of their work on understanding British values, respect and diversity; Chester, as part of their history topic studying the Romans; a local nature reserve, to study habitats as part of their science work; and the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool, as part of their music curriculum. Pupils said that they would like more opportunity to visit places because it helps them with their work when they get back to school.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They talk confidently about safety on the internet and the dangers of sharing information on social media, as well as the importance of cyber safety. They understand that there are

different forms of bullying. One pupil spoken to during the inspection talked confidently about the difference between 'bullying' and 'falling out with your friend' and how effectively her situation was dealt with by the adults in the school. Pupils have confidence in the adults around them to keep them safe.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils feel very happy and safe in school because they know the adults care about them and look after them.
- Attendance rates are above the national average for the majority of pupils. They appreciate the incentives and certificates they can receive, including the 'going for gold' award if they reach an attendance of 98%. Attendance for pupils who were previously persistently absent is improving. One pupil said with pride, 'I come to school every day now and I've learnt my three times tables.' However, there are still a small number of families whose children do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- Pupils are well mannered and polite. Their behaviour in lessons, at playtimes and as they move around the school is often exemplary. Their friendliness to each other and good-natured play is very evident and reflects the positive, caring ethos which has been created in the school.
- Pupils are aware that there are consequences to their actions. They respond well to the behaviour system, which is consistently implemented by all staff across the school. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour have decreased since its introduction this year. The school has a calm orderly atmosphere where low-level disruption is rare. There are a small number of pupils who sometimes display quite challenging behaviour but pupils say it is managed very well by the adults in the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils have declined since the previous inspection, especially at key stage 2. Despite improvements in progress and standards, they remain below those of other pupils of a similar age. The rates of progress for older pupils have been affected by a legacy of weak teaching, which has led to gaps in pupils' learning. Older pupils have had a lot to do to catch up and not all of them are working at the standard expected.
- The majority of pupils currently in the school are now making good progress in their learning. Pupils currently in lower key stage 2 have made rapid progress from low starting points at the end of key stage 1. The school's own assessment information shows that the majority are now working at the expected standard for their age.
- Work in pupils' books shows clearly that the effective action taken by leaders has improved the quality of teaching and learning across a range of subjects, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported by staff who have received training in order to support their needs. This group of children are making strong progress from their starting points as a result of this support. Leaders and staff work closely with a range of outside agencies to support the

pupils and their families. Careful monitoring of their progress allows teachers to meet their needs effectively through well-considered activities across a range of subjects. Pupils are supported to enable them to have access to all areas of the school curriculum. There is an increasing proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school who also have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The work in pupils' books, including those of pupils who are disadvantaged and the most able, shows that they are making better progress because of the better-quality teaching they receive. Disadvantaged pupils are supported well to enable them to catch up and the difference between them and their peers is diminishing in reading and mathematics. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement in the quality of the writing pupils produce, especially in subjects other than English.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in phonics dipped in 2016 to below the national average. This has been addressed swiftly through changes in the systematic teaching of phonics. The school's assessment information suggests that a higher proportion achieved the expected standard in 2017 than seen nationally. Nearly all pupils who do not reach the required standard in Year 1 do so by the end of the key stage because of the good support they receive.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Leaders ensure that the teaching of the youngest children is of a high quality. They provide a wide range of activities and opportunities that capture the imagination of the children and foster a love of learning from an early age. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the curriculum and environment both stimulate and excite the children, and allows them to reach their full potential.
- Welfare requirements are met and safeguarding procedures are secure and match those in the rest of the school.
- Leaders ensure that staff have the opportunity to work with other professionals to share good practice and have access to training to enhance their skills and knowledge further. Parents are very involved with their children's education. Leaders provide opportunities to enable them to support their child's learning effectively, including by attending phonics and number sessions.
- Children's understanding is typically in line with that of children of a similar age when they start Nursery. Evidence shows that they make good progress from their starting points. For the third consecutive year an increasing number of children are reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception and are above other children of a similar age nationally. The additional funding to support disadvantaged children is used well and they make strong progress. The difference between them and other children is beginning to diminish as the children move into Year 1.
- Adults use questions well. They are skilled at knowing when to join the children's play in order to maximise their learning. For example, when talking to a group of children concerned about their 'babies' and how to look after them, the adult was able to develop children's ideas and clarify their thinking and understanding about the care the 'babies' would need. These skills are a strong feature of the early years teaching in the school and make a very good contribution to children's progress.



- Teachers use high-quality ongoing assessments to identify children's next steps. Activities challenge the children to apply their knowledge and understanding. For example, when thinking about what 'Fire-fighter Bear' would need to put out a fire, children were encouraged to think carefully about the sounds in the words they wanted to write on their list. They were able to apply their phonics skills accurately in their own writing and to practise this skill independently in other areas within the setting. Most-able children confidently produce writing of a high quality, spelling familiar words correctly and using simple punctuation well.
- Adults promote children's independent skills successfully through clear and well-established routines. They provide opportunities throughout the day for children to work cooperatively to solve problems. For instance when two children were working out who was going to scrub which area of the path, logic was applied and the problem was solved very quickly: 'You do that bit, it's really dirty and you have more water than me.'
- The growing number of children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities in the early years are very well supported to allow them to have access to all areas of the curriculum. Staff have received extra training which allows them to meet the needs of this group of children. Parents speak highly of the care, guidance and support both they and their children receive from staff.

## School details

Unique reference number	104769
Local authority	St Helens
Inspection number	10024157

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	437
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Bowles
Headteacher	Tony McCoy
Telephone number	01744 678683
Website	<a href="http://www.sherdleyprimary.co.uk">www.sherdleyprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:Tony.McCoy@sthelens.org.uk">Tony.McCoy@sthelens.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	4–5 July 2013

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The percentage of pupils who receive special educational needs support is higher than the average. There are two pupils supported by an education, health and care plan.
- The number of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. This includes pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small proportion from other ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low compared to the national average.

- In 2016 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils reading and talked with pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the leader of the early years and a range of subject leaders. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and staff and took account of the 58 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Amanda Stringer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ann Gill	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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